



# Straight Talk on Social Security

*Waiting to Strengthen Social Security Would be a Mistake*  
Courtesy of the CATO Institute

Americans have waited long enough for their leaders in Washington to address a problem they have seen coming for years and which Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan calls “inexorable.”

The consequences of waiting will be dire. As the Cato Institute’s Mike Tanner wrote in a recent op-ed:

*“In less than 15 years, the federal government will have to begin finding billions of dollars to continue paying benefits -- by cutting benefits, raising taxes or borrowing even more money. Overall, Social Security’s unfunded liabilities total nearly \$12 trillion, and the longer we wait, the worse it gets. Estimates suggest that each year that we wait to reform Social Security costs between \$150 billion and \$600 billion more.”*

Furthermore, in his testimony before the House Financial Services Committee earlier this month, **Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan singled out 2008 as the year this crisis begins to manifest**, not 2018, 2042, 2052 or any of the other dates tossed out in this complex debate.

*“Because the pay-as-you-go system will be very difficult to manage, we need an alternative ... Real progress on these issues will unavoidably entail many difficult choices ... But the demographics are inexorable, and call for action before the leading edge of baby boomer retirement becomes evident in 2008.”*

President George W. Bush has left almost all options on the table as he seeks compromise with Congress. Waiting the problem out should not be one of them.